

CITY OF SAN ANTONIO

Application Processes:
Repair & Maintenance,
HDRC, & Demolition

HISTORIC PRESERVATION
OFFICE(HPO)



Planning Department
Historic Preservation Office
114 W. Commerce
(Municipal Plaza Building), 4th floor
San Antonio, TX 78283-3966

Purpose and Basic Method

The primary purpose of the City of San Antonio's Historic Preservation Office (HPO) is to preserve and protect the unique historic structures and design features of San Antonio. Accordingly, the historic and design codes from the City's Unified Development Code (UDC) require that certain actions affecting several types of properties within the city limits must be reviewed and approved, either by the HPO or the Historic and Design Review Commission (HDRC), which meets every first and third Wednesday of each month. For affected properties and actions, the historic and design review process must be completed and written approval obtained from the HPO before actions can be taken or permits can be issued by the Development Services Department or other City departments.

Affected Properties

The historic and design review is required for projects affecting the property's exterior at the following locations:

- (1) Properties located within any one of the City's 19 historic districts or at any of the City's 1300 local historic landmark properties
- (2) within the six River Improvement Overlay (RIO) districts (including the River Walk)
- (3) public rights-of-way
- (4) public construction projects

HPO Applications and Procedures

- (1) Repair/Maintenance Application
- (2) Historic and Design Review Commission Application
- (3) Demolition Application
- (4) Development Services Department's Permit Application
- (5) Landmark Designation Application
- (6) Tax Certification Application



HPO application forms may be obtained:

- (1) at the HPO reception counter (114 W. Commerce, 4th floor)
- (2) HPO website at <http://www.sanantonio.gov/planning/historic.asp>
- (3) by calling 210/207-7869 and asking that the forms be mailed or faxed

HPO applications:

- (1) must be submitted in person at the HPO reception counter
- (2) must be submitted ONLY at the HPO's downtown office (114 W. Commerce St., 4th floor);
- (3) cannot be submitted by fax or mail, except for applicants or project consultants that are located outside of the city limits

There are no fees for the historic and design review process.

Repair & Maintenance Application (RMA)

The RMA is used for:

- (1) replacement of aged or deteriorated exterior materials or surface finishes with the same materials or finishes
- (2) minor exterior changes in colors, materials, or design.

RMA Examples:

- (1) repainting with the same or very similar colors
- (2) re-roofing with the same design and same or very similar materials and colors
- (3) installation of new or replacement exterior air conditioning units or electrical meter loops at relatively secluded locations such as in rear yards or on rooftops (not visible from the street)

Most RMA applications do not require HDRC review and can usually be processed in a few minutes at the HPO reception counter. Provided all other city code requirements are satisfied, building permits can be obtained on the 9th floor of the Municipal Plaza Building (114 W. Commerce) immediately after RMAs are approved.

RMA Application Requirements

The applicant must provide the HPO with the following:

- (1) color photographs of the fronts of all homes, buildings, or other structures where work is proposed;
- (2) color photographs of each location where changes are to occur;
- (3) a completed RMA form; and
- (4) a print out of the legal description of the property from [House Numbering](#) on the 9th floor of the Municipal Plaza Building.

HDRC Application

The HDRC application is used for:

- (1) exterior changes in colors, materials, or designs;
- (2) new construction; and
- (3) demolitions within historic or RIO districts.

Examples of items that are typically reviewed using HDRC applications:

- (1) new construction, additions, or exterior renovations;
- (2) new exterior signage or changes to existing exterior signage;
- (3) placement of exterior ornaments or accessories;
- (4) exterior landscaping, lighting, and fencing;

HDRC Application Requirements

For each property address where work is proposed, the applicant must assemble and bring to the HPO the following:

- (1) completed HDRC application;
- (2) site plan, floor plan, and exterior elevation drawings;
- (3) an itemized written list of all proposed exterior changes;
- (4) color photographs of the fronts of all buildings or other structures to be modified and also current color photographs of each location where changes are to occur.

If the applicant is not the property owner, the Owner Authorization Form must also be completed (page 2 of the HDRC application).

HDRC Review Process

Once the completed HDRC application is submitted to the HPO, the following process begins:

- (1) Upon submission to the HPO, a staff member will explain the details of the HDRC meeting.
- (2) The applicant is given a sign to be placed on the property as public notice that an HDRC request is being considered. The sign should be remain in a visible location at the address up for HDRC consideration until the HDRC has made a determination.
- (3) The HPO staff reviews the application within approximately three days after the deadline date for the application and decides whether or not to place the request on the current HDRC agenda and what to recommend to the HDRC regarding the request.
- (4) If the staff decides to recommend anything other than approval as submitted, the staff collaborates with the applicant to decide whether or not the application will be withdrawn, postponed, or revised. The staff has the option to withhold from HDRC consideration any request that appears to be in contradiction with the City's Unified Development Code, historic and design codes, or zoning statutes or regulations; that appears to contain factual misrepresentations, errors, or omissions; or for which there appears to be insufficient information to make an informed decision.
- (5) The applicant or a representative, such as the project architect or contractor, must attend the designated HDRC public hearing, which occurs every 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month at 3:00. The HDRC will either approve, deny, postpone, or send the application to committee.
- (6) If an application is rejected, withdrawn, or postponed, it becomes inactive

- until it is resubmitted in an acceptable form.
- (7) If the request is denied, the applicant may submit revised plans that address the reasons for denial or appeal to the Board of Adjustments within 30 days after the denial date.
 - (8) If there are issues or questions about the request that cannot be resolved without a visit to the work site by the HDRC, the request is sent to a HDRC committee. Each committee consists of approximately 3-5 commissioners. The applicant is encouraged, but not required, to attend the committee meeting and will be notified of the committee meeting date at least several days in advance. Such meetings usually occur during the interval between the commission meeting at which a request is referred to committee and the next commission meeting. Issues are often resolved and requests approved at the next commission meeting.
 - (9) If the request is approved, the applicant will receive the approval document, called a Certificate of Appropriateness, in the mail. If needed immediately, a copy can be obtained at the 4th floor Development Services counter (call 207-7869 to make arrangements). The certificates are usually mailed to applicants on the next day Friday following the HDRC meeting when approval was granted. Provided all other city code requirements and regulations relating to the project are satisfied, building permits for projects that do not require plan checking may be obtained on the 9th floor of the Municipal Plaza Building immediately after receiving the Certificate of Appropriateness from the HPO.
 - (10) For projects that require plan checking, permits can be obtained after plan approval.

Demolition Application

This application is used for all demolition requests by a private property owner or contractor for demolitions of whole structures or partial exterior demolitions within the city limits. Other City departments' demolition applications cannot be accepted in lieu of HPO/HDRC demolition forms and

the HPO staff does not sign other departments' forms.

Requirements for Demolition Application

For each property address where demolition is proposed, the applicant must submit the following to the HPO:

- (1) color photographs of the front, rear, and all sides, of all homes, buildings, outbuildings, or other structures proposed for demolition;
- (2) two or three color photographs of the property where demolition is proposed that are taken from across the street from that property and that include some of the surrounding properties and structures;
- (3) a completed HPO demolition form; and
- (4) a print out of the legal description of the property from House Numbering on the 9th floor of the Municipal Plaza Building.

Submission of the demolition application to the HPO is the beginning of a process that includes the following additional elements:

- 1. HPO demolition applications that are complete, that do not require HDRC review, and that request demolition only of structures that the staff determines not to be significant according to the applicable historic or design code criteria, can usually be approved at the time of submittal to the HPO counter.
- 2. If in doubt about a determination of significance, the HPO staff may elect to postpone a decision until additional research and/or an inspection of the structures concerned can be performed by the HPO. The HPO research and inspection must be concluded and placed on the HDRC agenda within 30 days after the date of submission of the demolition application.
- 3. If the HPO determines that a structure proposed for demolition is significant according to the applicable historic or design code criteria and,make a request to the HDRC for landmark designation for that structure. In that event, the applicant and the property owner will be notified of the HPO's request, of the meeting

date and location when and where the request will be considered by the HDRC, and of any HDRC Demolition Committee meetings that are scheduled. The applicant and/or the owner will have an opportunity to express their opinions about demolition of the structure, or to demonstrate economic hardship to the HDRC during the HDRC meeting when the HPO's request is considered and during any HDRC Demolition Committee meetings that are held. If the HPO's approval for designation as a historic landmark is given by HDRC, the Zoning Commission, and then City Council, the applicant must demonstrate an unreasonable economic hardship by this action or other compelling circumstances to allow for demolition.



Jefferson High School, designated a historically exceptional (HE) local landmark

Visit the Historic Preservation Office website at:
www.sanantonio.gov/planning/historic.asp

